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# Advisers' Role Questioned

By Ward Just

Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, Dec. 13 — The struggle between the American advisers and the commander of the 25th Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) seems oddly anachronistic in December of 1966, with nearly 400,000 U.S. combat troops in the country and American casualties regularly running even or ahead of the Vietnamese.

The advisory effort has been all but forgotten this year, by both the journalists and—vastly more important—by the American military command. Since the introduction of American combat troops, with its concomitant assumption that it would be the Americans who would defeat the enemy Main Force troops and therefore win the war, the advisory effort languished.

The dispute between Brig. Gen. Phan Trong Chinh, who has all but dissociated his command from the American advisers over a disagreement with an energetic American colonel, has brought the advisers into the news again.

The advisory effort has always seemed a marvelously American invention, idealistic, romantic in the Lawrence of Arabia mold, and basically unworkable. The point where advice ends and orders begin has never been very clear. Given the general level of competence of ARVN officers, the best American advisers soon succumbed to frustration or cynicism.

Once, before the arrival of American combat troops, adviser's jobs were the most coveted in Vietnam. Now the road to promotion and fame, fortune and glory lies in commanding American units—and most captains, therefore, want American infantry companies and

## News Analysis

most lieutenant colonels American battalions.

That is where the action is, and that is where the energetic soldier may work to his greatest effect.

The advisory effort, in any case, has not been particularly successful.

Trained by the Americans as a strike force against Main Force enemy units, the ARVN was thoroughly defeated on the battlefield last year. Ironically, the American command had been criticized for its training advice—for the reason that until 1965, the Communists operated as guerrillas. When they came into the open in battalion and regimental strength, the ARVN proved incapable of dealing with them; the ARVN failure was the reason of the introduction of American combat troops.

Since the arrival of American combat troops, the advisory effort has languished—low on an ever-mounting list of priorities.

Now these priorities are sorting themselves out, with the new theology being that the ARVN should abandon its strike force role and begin to work in support of Revolutionary Development, elsewhere described as Pacification, by use of small unit offensive actions.

What this means is except for certain elite units like the Rangers and Marines, the 300,000 man Vietnamese Regular Army should spend its time clearing and holding, not searching and destroying.

High officials, from President John Kennedy to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge have long said that this war was for the Vietnamese to win or lose, that the American effort was at best only an adjunct and an assistance.

This view fell out of favor during the huge American buildup when with a few striking successes against the enemy Main Force units it was thought that American troops could pull the fat from the fire.

Now the pendulum has come back to the old view, and officials now realize they were right all along: that the war really is for the Vietnamese to win or lose, and as satisfying as the war against the big battalions was, it was not the main question.

The main objective of this war is still the rooting out of the guerrillas and Communist political and economic infrastructure.

Many of the realistic civilians here are now coming to the belief that the reason pacification is not progressive is the failure of the military to clear secure areas. Revolutionary Development cadres cannot work in areas still dominated by Vietcong battalions.

"The military," here refers to the Vietnamese military—and their American advisers.

Whether the Vietnamese prosecute this new role depends to a degree on how forceful the American command puts its case.

Which brings the question back to Brig. Gen. Chinh and his 25th ARVN Division, from which he wants to sever all ties with the Americans.

The attitude of the American military command in Saigon has been, on the one hand, to permit business as usual in the Vietnamese military establishment (with its tangled lines of political and family favoritism), while on the other hand saying that with the vast weight of American men

and materials it did not matter; the Allies could not lose the war.

Only now is the corollary coming to light: That it may be equally true that the Allies cannot win it either in an acceptable "time frame," to use the expression current here.

This is the point at which military and civilian officials here collide, with civilians arguing that fundamental reform of the ARVN is crucial if there is to be progress.

The assumption now is that the American military command will not press the Chinh issue. He will keep his command, and the American advisers will keep quiet. There will be no unseemly public quarrel and, all will appear calm on the surface.

The price to be paid, some well-informed observers here suggest, is progress in pacification in the provinces surrounding Saigon, particularly in Haungia to the west and Longan to the south—the No. 1 Vietnamese and American priority areas.

These provinces are the responsibility of Chinh's 25th ARVN Division, a division—even with American advisers—held to be the worst in Vietnam. Without fundamental reform, there is little prospect that the division will improve and pacification, therefore, go forward.



# PEKING GIVES NEW WARNING ON VIET WAR

## China Again Promises To Intervene If Asked By Hanoi Regime

By PETER J. KUMPA  
(Hong Kong Bureau of The Sun)

Hong Kong, Dec. 20—Communist China today issued fresh warnings that it would intervene in the Vietnam conflict if invited to by Vietnamese Communist leaders.

Led by Lin Piao, Peking's second-ranking official, messages of support and congratulations were sent to the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front on the sixth anniversary of its establishment.

The threat to enter the fighting was made in the *People's Daily*, the party journal. It was the third such threat in three days.

### Paper Quoted

"The Chinese people," said the paper, "who have consistently and wholeheartedly supported the Vietnamese people in their struggle against United States aggression and for national salvation are resolved and have made all preparations to take such actions as they and the Vietnamese people deem necessary at any place and at any time to jointly attack the American aggressors."

The paper charged the United States was testing Communist China's determination to help the Vietnamese Communists by dive-bombing Peking's Embassy in Hanoi five days ago. The Defense Department in Washington has denied that any American aircraft dropped ordnance inside the North Vietnamese capital.

"Mountains may fall and the earth may collapse," said the party organ, "but China's determination to support Hanoi and the Viet Cong would not waver."

### Note Of Congratulations

Lin Piao, Communist China's Vice Premier and Defense Minister, sent a five-paragraph message of congratulations to his Viet Cong counterpart. He called the Viet Cong "the greatest heroes who are truly invincible and can never be cowed or deceived" into peace talks.

# U.S. Military Sought Control Over Pacification

By R. W. APPLE JR.  
Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Dec. 20 — An attempt was made several months ago to persuade President Johnson to transfer supervision of the lagging South Vietnamese pacification program to the American military command, authoritative sources disclosed today.

The effort, fostered by United States military officers here and pressed by ranking officials in the Pentagon, was unsuccessful. The American Embassy has retained the task of advising the Saigon regime on anti-guerrilla campaigns in the countryside and of urging upon it a more resolute program.

However, tensions have persisted among officials in the wake of the unsuccessful military effort to take over the program.

Asked how close the embassy had come to losing its responsibilities in this area, a prominent official said with a rueful smile: "quite close."

### Reached White House

The sources said the proposal reached the White House staff, if not President Johnson's desk, some weeks before the Manila conference in October of the allies fighting in Vietnam. It is not known whether Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara was among the sponsors of the proposal.

Among those reported to have opposed it are Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the directors of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Agency for International Development and the United States Information Agency.

William J. Porter, the deputy American ambassador in Saigon, was in Washington at the time and added his objections. Mr. Porter is in charge of American civil programs in rural South Vietnam.

Mr. McNamara's trip to Saigon in mid-October is believed to have been related to the controversy.

When the military proposal was rejected, the sources said,

## Effort to Take Over Lagging Program From Embassy in South Vietnam Failed

Washington officials pulled from the files a plan submitted by the embassy last April. It called for grouping all civilian field operations here under a staff headed by Mr. Porter. This plan was approved in early November, and an Office of Civilian Operations has since been established.

As a result of the unsuccessful effort by the military, the reorganization of the mission has been carried out under extreme stress. Some sources said that Mr. Porter had been ordered to prepare his new staff in four months "or else."

The deadline will be met, from all indications.

But the atmosphere of urgency, together with apparently garbled accounts of the discussions of last autumn, have given rise to reports that Washington had told the embassy to show striking results in the pacification of hamlets and villages within four months or face the loss of supervisory authority.

### Deadline Theory Denied

Best informed officials in Saigon deny these reports, which have come to be known as "the 120-day-time-bomb-theory." The officials said that anyone with the most rudimentary knowledge of the problems of driving the guerrillas and their political agents from the countryside knows that the job will take years, not months, no matter who is responsible for it.

"You've got to remember," one official remarked, "that the main problem out here isn't American officials. The main problem is the Vietcong."

The principal arguments put forward by the civilians in Washington, the sources reported, were the following:

①The whole trend of the American diplomatic effort in

South Vietnam during the last six months has been to persuade the ruling generals that they must yield to an elected civilian government, and this task would clearly be hampered if the American Embassy were to yield a large share of its responsibilities to the military.

②Giving the military responsibility for a program that will have to continue long after American troops have left Vietnam would do little to allay South Vietnamese suspicions that the United States does not, in fact, plan to pull its troops out of the country in the foreseeable future.

③The American military command, headed by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, was already burdened with the tasks of retraining the South Vietnamese Army for a new role—providing security for pacification workers.

### Military Gives Reasons

The military arguments, which General Westmoreland is not thought to have endorsed, were said to be that the army could provide better coordination between security forces and pacification teams and that the army understood the problem better.

Some observers believe that officers in General Westmoreland's headquarters had begun to smart under repeated embassy demands for more military protection for the pacification workers, most of whom have refused to stay in the villages they are assigned to because of fear of attack.

One element in the civilian opposition to the military proposal was hindsight: many officials recalled that the French Army, first during the waning phases of the Indochina war against the Vietminh, the Communist-led Vietnamese force, and later in Algeria, took over much of the responsibility for pacification.

In neither country were the results very satisfactory.

as "a paper tiger outwardly strong but inwardly weak."

The chosen heir of Mao Tse-tung, party chairman, also added that Communist China regarded the Viet Cong's battle its own.

### Every Preparation

"We have made every preparation," said Lin, "we are determined to make the maximum national sacrifice in resolutely supporting you to carry through to the end your struggle against

Chen Yi, Foreign Minister, also sent a support message while Peking's papers today featured Premier Chou En-lai's message sent yesterday. The papers also featured the nation-wide rallies protesting the alleged bombing of Hanoi and the Chinese Embassy by American planes.

## 50 Algerian Girls Protest Vietnam War

young girls rounded up by the Government party burst through a cordon of Algerian policemen today and staged an anti-Vietnam-war demonstration in the United States Embassy courtyard.

While they chanted "Peace in Vietnam," the United States Ambassador, John Jernegan, came out on the Embassy steps to receive a petition calling for withdrawal of United States forces